

QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION,

Q. 300: THE ONLY WAY TO ULTIMATE REALITY

Om Sri Sai Ram

Prasanthi Sandesh, Question and Answer session

Q. 300:

Thank you for your time. The question today is this:

What is the only way to the ultimate reality? I repeat, what is the only one way to the ultimate reality? The question implies that there is more than one way leading to the ultimate reality. But each one has his own approach.

Let us try to understand the question to answer it. In fact, let me tell you the answer straightaway. The one who sees the self pervading all beings and also sees all beings pervading the self, that person sees the Divine. It means that I see the self in all beings and the self pervades all beings. This kind of approach is the only way which leads to the ultimate reality.

This one has transcended all limitations and has destroyed all boundaries. To the one who sees the self in all beings, this body does not appear as 'I' and the tree does not appear as 'Thou'. His 'I' permeates the tree. And the tree's 'Thou' permeates him. For him there is no boundary line. It is this line of 'I' and 'Thou' in this world that creates the feeling of a boundary. Yes, to feel a boundary between 'I' and 'Thou' means that you'll feel yourself to be separate.

So, there are two views. One view is that all beings are in the self and the self pervades all beings. This means that there is only the self. There is no question of 'I' and 'Thou'. This is one view. Let's try to understand it.

On the other hand, there's another view also. Martin Buber has written a book entitled '*I and Thou*.' Martin Buber is a Jewish philosopher, and a great thinker of this century. He is one of the great thinkers who is adored and appreciated by everybody. But Jewish thinking does not go beyond 'I' and 'Thou'. He has done a deep study of the relationships between 'I' and 'Thou' and he says that the highest experience of life happens in the perfect relationship between 'I' and 'Thou'.

What this means is that Buber advocates the philosophy of 'I' and 'Thou' or remaining separate, and he claims that in this relationship lays perfection. That's what Buber's view is. Also, he feels that nobody can grow alone. In a sense, it is true that nobody can be alone because even if he is alone, he will be very unhappy. This is Martin Buber's view.

This is worth understanding because Eastern thought is just the opposite of this. Just the opposite! The East says that the more you go into alone-ness, the more you become alone, absolutely alone, the more you'll grow. So, Eastern philosophy

believes in alone-ness. It's not a question of relationship or interrelationship. No! It is just the opposite of Buber's point of view.

Jewish philosophy sees it from the other end. It says that the more you enter into alone-ness, the poorer and more wretched you'll become because there can be no growth without relationships. So the deeper the relationship, the more you'll grow and the ultimate depth of the relationship is in the closeness between 'I' and 'Thou'.

When you say 'Thou' to someone, then through this you will also reach a certain height. When you address someone with love you are also transformed. This is good. This dimension is valuable. However, there are two types of people in this world and the East and the West have become symbols for these two types of people. Yes, they are two opposite halves.

Jung has accepted two types of personalities and rightly so. One is an introvert and the other is an extrovert. The introvert grows in alone-ness so the more alone he is, the more he'll grow. The presence of the other harms him. Whenever he returns from a crowd, he feels that he has lost something. Whenever he meets with another person, he feels as if he has fallen downwards. Whenever he talks to someone, he feels that something in him is disturbed. When he is silent, in alone-ness, with nobody else there but himself, he feels his soul soaring towards the sky. This is the introvert.

The East is a symbol for this introversion. So, the religions which were born in the East have emphasised solitude, alone-ness, *sanyasa*, freedom from relationship, liberation. On the other hand, all the religions which originated in the West outside of India, all originated from the Jewish religion. Therefore, all the religions that were born in India have their roots in Hinduism and all the religions that were born outside India have their roots in Judaism. Yes. The Hindus and the Jewish religions are the only original religions. All other religions are branches of these two.

The Hindu religion is introvert. The Jewish religion is extrovert. This is why Hindus cannot understand a Jew at all and a Jew cannot understand a Hindu. Just imagine a meeting between these two viewpoints! Imagine that! It would be very difficult. It would be very difficult because they are very different types.

A Jewish person says, "Alone I'll die and I'll shrink. All growth is in the relationship (between man and God). The richer the relationship, the more my consciousness will grow."

So, you'll not see a Jewish mystic without a wife and children. The Jewish mystic will be a part of the society. He does not renounce the world. He cannot even conceive of that! On the contrary, he'll have more relationships than others because his very understanding is that the more relationships he has, the more he will grow and develop an inter-relationship. Relatedness or kinship with others is his way to grow. This is the Jewish approach.

In brief I would say, the Jewish approach believes in relationships and inter-relationships. Jewish thinking says that ultimately, man remains as 'I' and the whole of humanity becomes 'Thou'. The whole universe will become 'Thou' and the man

will remain as 'I'. In the meeting which will happen between these two, between "I" and "Thou", man's soul will reach the ultimate and perfect growth.

But Jewish thinking does not go beyond this. In other words, unless I meet the other, who is 'Thou', there'll be no perfection. Until then 'I' and 'Thou' are separate. Without this meeting, the 'I' will remain all alone and will begin to shrink. This is what the Jewish philosophy is.

But Eastern Hindu philosophy goes beyond this. It goes beyond this, yes. It says that as long as 'Thou' is still 'Thou' and 'I' is still 'I', no matter how deep the relationship may be, it is still not the ultimate. You may cultivate or you may develop intimate relationships, and yet if 'I' remains 'I' and 'Thou' remains 'Thou', it is not possible for any kind of perfection to happen because the difference is still there. This distance between 'I' and 'Thou' may be very small, but still it is a distance.

An interesting thing about the distance is that the smaller it is, the more it hurts and the more it pinches; while the bigger the distance, the less it is noticed. So the distance is noticed more when it is very small, and then the pain is terrible. That's why there is an intrinsic reason for the pain that lovers experience. The distance may be small, yet it has become completely and deeply experienced and that pinches the lover. Therefore, the distance cannot disappear however intimate and close they may be. But they hope that someday that distance will disappear.

Each time lovers come close, a friction, a collision also begins to happen. But the distance does not dissolve. The sense of distance is greater because now it hurts more. It hurts more because it feels that the distance should dissolve.

Now the shore is so close that you can stretch your arms and touch the other. But the touch or feeling of oneness does not happen, so the distance remains. Even if you go very close to the Divine, even when the language becomes the same as that of lovers, 'I' and 'Thou', yet the distance continues.

So, the writer of the *Upanishads* says this, 'If one's self is not in all beings and all beings are not in one's self, if 'Thou' does not become 'I' and 'I' does not become 'Thou', the distance will remain.'

This is the jump where the lover becomes the beloved and the beloved becomes the lover. This is the last jump where the devotee becomes God and God becomes the devotee. This is the last jump. It's no longer clear who is who. Who is who is no longer known.

So, the sage of the *Upanishads* says, "The one who sees the self pervading all beings and also sees that all beings pervade the self, that's the Brahman, what the ultimate reality is!"

There's no other way. This is the final statement that the intellect can think about and perceive. Beyond this, the world of perception ends and there's no possibility for thinking.

Thank you for your time. We'll meet in the next session. Thank you.